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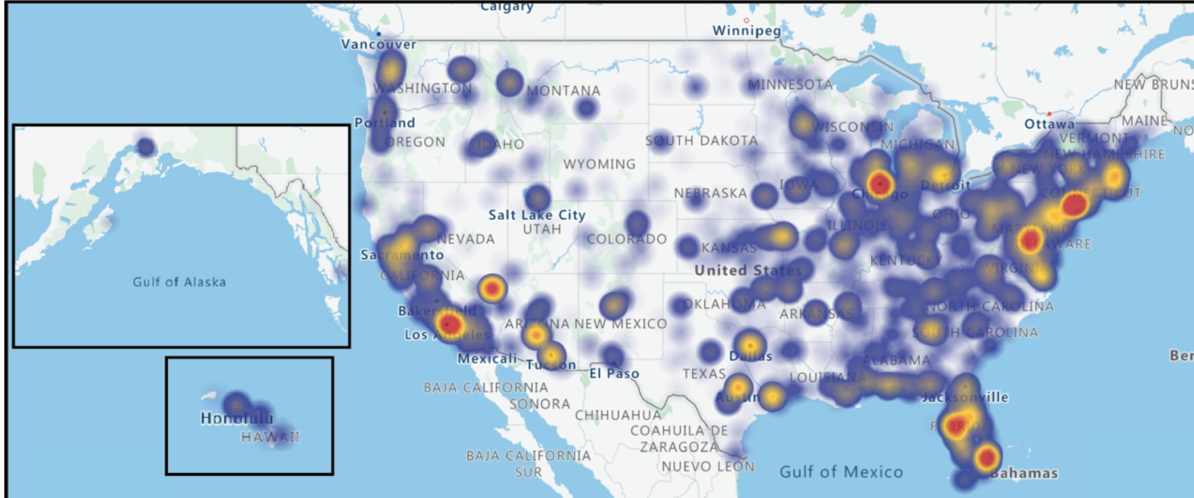
## 2020 SAMHSA SOAR June eNews

### SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum Celebrates 10,000 Graduates

Thank you for showing that SOARWorks!

#### **10,000<sup>th</sup> Person Graduates from SAMHSA SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum**

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center is proud to announce a new milestone—10,000 people have passed the SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum! Since its launch in 2014, the growth of the SOAR Online Course has been tremendous and wide-reaching—there are graduates from all 50 states! We at the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center are thrilled that 10,000 people are equipped with the knowledge and tools to help eligible individuals experiencing or at risk of homelessness in their communities with Supplemental Security Income (SSI)/Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) applications.



*Heat map of SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum graduates*

To highlight the reach of the SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum, we have developed a heatmap of our 10,000 graduates to show where SOAR training has been concentrated across the country. Are you interested in connecting with your fellow graduates? Reach out to your SOAR [State Team Lead and Local Leads](#) to connect with other SOAR specialists in your area.

Will you be graduate 10,001? If so, start the SOAR Online Course: Adult Curriculum today!

Register for the SOAR Online Course

## Sharing Our Successes

### Michigan's Department of Corrections SOARs

Katherine Merrill, LMSW, Bureau of Health Care Services social worker, Michigan Reformatory, Michigan Department of Corrections, wrote in to share this great success story:



“Within the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) is the state-funded medical/re-entry social work team—a group of 11 social workers, 6 of whom are certified SOAR case managers. We work to provide services at the 29 MDOC facilities across the State of Michigan. Although SOAR is only one of the many responsibilities some of us are tasked with, it plays an important role in assisting those who have significant medical needs and are leaving the prison system access benefits as quickly as possible.

One SOAR application that stands out to me was completed with a client who was being discharged on his maximum prison sentence. Prior to incarceration, he experienced homelessness, often living out of abandoned homes. His life-long experiences with mental illness and chronic medical conditions and history of homelessness made him an ideal candidate for a SOAR-assisted application. Prior to discharge, I was able to work with the client, his MDOC mental health team, and the local community mental health providers to ensure that an SSI/SSDI application was submitted and follow-up could be made in the community. Due to a lack of funding at the time of discharge, he did require a short stay in a local homeless shelter with extensive wrap-around services. Several weeks after his discharge, I received an approval letter from the Social Security Administration (SSA). I was happy to see that his address had been updated to that of an adult foster care home. The

SOAR process made it possible for this client to quickly receive benefits that resulted in safe, secure, and stable housing.”

Thanks for sharing this fantastic story of how SOAR works in the criminal justice system, Katherine! To learn more about applying SOAR in criminal justice settings, view our [issue brief](#), [frequently asked questions document](#), and [infographic](#)!

## A Favorable Claim for a Veteran Engaging the SOAR Model at the Hearing Level of Appeal in Massachusetts

Liam Connolly, outreach social worker for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Boston Healthcare System’s Healthcare for Homeless Veterans (HCHV) program, wrote in to share this incredible SOAR success that highlights how SOAR works for appeals!



“As a member of the Boston VA Affairs Healthcare System’s HCHV program, I was thrilled to become certified as a SOAR Specialist in 2017. This was an opportunity to support Veterans eligible for SSI/SSDI income with quality initial applications for disability benefits and complemented my ongoing work to connect Veterans experiencing homelessness with housing and care.

My first experience using SOAR at the hearing level was with a Veteran with whom I began to work after he had independently submitted the initial application, using the SOAR model at the reconsideration level. I became aware of the wealth of resources the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center offered to assist with hearings after the Veteran decided to appeal the denial of the reconsideration and set to learn the process. Abigail Kirkman, my SAMHSA SOAR TA Center liaison, and Pam Heine, the “hearings guru” of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, further reinforced what I was learning and empowered me to navigate my first administrative law judge (ALJ) hearing. Their guidance included requesting appointed representative status, the Grid rules, preparing a holistic representation of the Veteran’s impairments, and coordinating legal representation through Greater Boston Legal Services. The ALJ ruled in favor of the Veteran based on the evidence in his file; she indicated that the evidence from the comprehensive Medical Summary Report, a critical SOAR component, showed that the Veteran was eligible for, and to be awarded, SSDI.

This is one example of how the SOAR program reinforces VA’s mission to end Veteran homelessness and support housing recovery.”

What a fantastic SOAR success! Keep SOARing, Liam! To learn more about how SOAR works for appeals, check out the recently released [appeals toolkit](#)!

Submit Your SOAR Success

\*Sharing Our Successes stories are edited for brevity and clarity. All client names have been changed to protect anonymity.

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**[New Podcast! VA and SOAR: Income and Benefits Dialogue](#)**

In May 2020, Jen Elder, assistant director of the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center, joined Dr. Carma Heitzman, national director of the VA's Homeless Veterans Community Employment Service Program, to discuss how communities can connect Veterans to income through employment and benefits. Adrienne Nash Melendez from the VA Grant and Per Diem Program Office facilitated the dialogue, which offered creative tips for serving Veterans during COVID-19.

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## New Article Examines Using University-Community Partnerships for SOAR Implementation as a Mechanism to End Homelessness

A new article, "The SOAR Model as an Effective Mechanism for University-Community Partnerships to End Homelessness," which was co-authored by SAMHSA SOAR TA Director Kristin Lupfer and Assistant Director Jen Elder, has been published in the *Journal of Social Work Education*. This article explores an initiative from the National Center on Excellence in Homeless Services that uses social work education as a mechanism to enhance and expand local capacity for SOAR services. Four case studies of active university-community partnerships are provided to demonstrate how the SOAR approach can be applied within university settings to end homelessness in local communities.

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## Events



### SOAR Webinar: Using the SOAR Model with SSA Appeals

June 18, 2020, 3:00-4:30 p.m. ET

In this webinar, the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center will introduce its updated *SOAR Appeals Toolkit* designed to assist SOAR providers with appealing SSI/SSDI denials. Guest speakers who work with appeals will guide participants through a few sections of the toolkit. Each presenter will offer practice tips on effectively representing SOAR applicants with appeals at the

reconsideration and ALJ levels. Participants will learn more about how to partner with their local Legal Aid advocates to ensure continued representation with hearings. Participants will also learn more about how to represent applicants with appeals during the age of COVID-19.

## [SOARing Over Lunch Conference Calls](#)

*July 7, 2020, 1:00-2:00 p.m. ET*

The next SOARing Over Lunch Conference Call will take place on July 7, 2020, at 1:00 p.m. ET! The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center hosts this series of informal monthly calls designed to help support SOAR efforts across the country. Participants can join to ask about any SOAR-related question they may have.

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## **SOAR Job Postings**

### **California**

Homeless Outreach Program Integrated Care System is seeking a full-time SOAR benefits specialist based in Los Angeles, California. The successful candidate will conduct eligibility screenings, provide administrative support, and coordinate program activities to attach individuals to the Benefits Advocacy Services Program.

Learn more about this posting on the [SOARWorks website](#). Do you have a job posting you would like to share with the SOAR community? Submit it to the [SAMHSA SOAR TA Center](#)!

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## **Get Social with the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center**

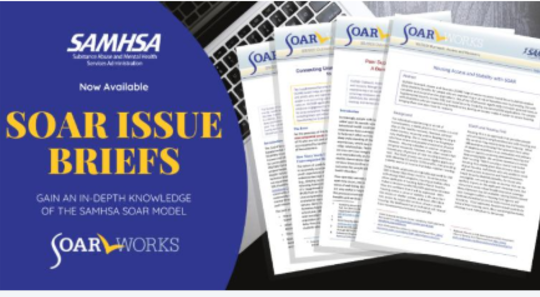
Hear more about what SAMHSA SOAR is up to via [@samhsagov](#) on Twitter, [@samhsa](#) on Facebook, and [Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration](#) on LinkedIn!



**SAMHSA** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) 109,012 followers 3w • 🌐

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) is a national program designed to increase access to the disability income benefit programs administered by the [Social Security Administration](#) for eligible adults and children who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness and have a serious mental illness, medical impairment, and/or a co-occurring substance use disorder.

The SAMHSA SOAR TA Center keeps a comprehensive list of issue briefs available online where you can read more about the SOAR process <https://lnkd.in/eMbu2e7>




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Now Available  
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GAIN AN IN-DEPTH KNOWLEDGE OF THE SAMHSA SOAR MODEL  
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Reactions




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**CASE MANAGERS:** April is the Month of the Military Child 🇺🇸👶🏻 Join the SAMHSA SOAR TA Center in celebrating this month by taking the SOAR Online Course: Child Curriculum to learn how you can help eligible children experiencing or at risk of homelessness apply for the Social Security Administration's (SSA) disability program: Supplemental Security Income (SSI). <https://lnkd.in/eFXm9TF>




**SAMHSA**  
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APRIL IS  
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14

Reactions



Like Comment Share

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## Federal Updates

### [Replace Your Social Security Card Online in 43 States and the District of Columbia](#)

If you need to replace your lost or misplaced Social Security card, SSA's online application makes getting a replacement card easier than ever. Online card replacement is available if you live in the District of Columbia or one of the 43 states that can verify state ID information for SSA. If you are only requesting a replacement card and you are making no changes, you may be able to use SSA's free online service. All you need to do is create a *my Social Security* account and meet certain requirements. Opening a personal *my Social Security* account is easy, convenient, and secure.

### [Appointed Representative Best Practices and Tips](#)

SSA has developed a three-page fact sheet on best practices and tips for appointed representatives. Highlighted topics include online services, submitting documents, initial claims, reconsideration and hearing requests, status inquiries and field office contacts, and representative issues.

### [New SAMHSA Publication Explores Helping Justice-Involved Women Reenter the Community](#)

A new publication by SAMHSA, *After Incarceration: A Guide to Helping Women Reenter the Community*, provides an overview of promising practices that corrections and community-based service providers should consider in supporting women's transitions from correctional facilities to the community. It is a "checklist" of considerations when working with women who are justice involved.

## Partner Opportunity: ARDRAW Grant Application Period Reopening

*Applications due: June 19, 2020*

SSA is awarding graduate students \$10,000 stipends to research work, rehabilitation, and disability issues through the Analyzing Relationships between Disability, Rehabilitation, and Work (ARDRAW) Small Grant Program. The objective of ARDRAW is to foster new analyses of work, rehabilitation, and disability issues, which may develop innovative and fresh perspectives on disability by providing research stipends to a broad spectrum of graduate students.

Applicants must be masters, doctoral, or post-doctoral-level part-time or full-time graduate students pursuing studies in accredited programs at the time of the award (fall semester of 2020). Selected students will receive a stipend of \$10,000 for the 1-year program.

Learn more about the program by watching a [prerecorded informational webinar](#). The webinar provides a brief introduction to the program, reviews the elements of a successful application, and answers questions from potential applicants. Email [ardraw@policyresearchinc.org](mailto:ardraw@policyresearchinc.org) with any questions.

Learn More and Apply



The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access, and Recovery (SOAR) Technical Assistance (TA) Center is sponsored by SAMHSA, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Disclaimer: The SAMHSA SOAR Technical Assistance Center is sending this eNews with support from SAMHSA, HHS. Its contents are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official view of HHS or SAMHSA.

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